

Moran Sponsors Drought Legislation for Kansas Farmers and Ranchers

Washington, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today announced that he has sponsored drought assistance legislation for farmers and ranchers hit hard by disastrous weather conditions in 2003 and 2004. The \$3 billion legislation was introduced today at a press conference in Washington, D.C.

"Farmers and ranchers have been hit hard over the past two years and need assistance immediately," Moran said. "It is time to stop playing politics with this issue. We have recently seen how devastating weather conditions can be for agriculture producers in Florida and the southern United States. This same level of devastation, over a longer period of time, has hit the plains of Kansas, and we need to do something now to help our farmers."

Today, Moran, along with Congressman Charles Stenholm (D-TX), Ranking Minority Member on the House Committee on Agriculture, introduced drought legislation as a final attempt to get assistance prior to adjournment later this week, prior to the election. Late last month, the Senate passed a similar \$3 billion assistance package that House and Senate negotiators are scheduled to debate, but a compromised version of the Senate-passed bill could cut assistance by half. Today's legislation seeks to keep drought assistance at \$3 billion, as it was passed by the Senate.

"Conditions in many parts of Kansas in recent years have rivaled the days of the dust bowl," Moran said. "This assistance is necessary-it's about survival of our farmers, ranchers and our Kansas communities that depend on agriculture as part of the local economy."

According to Kansas State University research, Kansas alone lost \$1.1 billion of its economy in 2001 and 2002 due to drought. In 2003, it is estimated that \$275 million was lost by our producers; and in 2004, wheat producers lost another \$150 million. The majority of those losses this year, \$82 million, occurred in northwest Kansas, which has had a drought for a solid five years.

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